

Top Ten Tips for Using Legumes in School Meals

First of all, what is a legume? A legume is a dry bean or pea. Legumes can be purchased in dry form and cooked at school or purchased canned/pre-cooked.

Why would a school want to serve more legumes?

- To increase the fiber and decrease the fat in school meals
- Use as a low-cost meat extender
- To offer more vegetarian choices



1. Consider dishes which you already serve that include legumes such as chili, baked beans, etc. You don't have to start from square one!

My recipes which contain legumes include:

2. Use legumes in home-made soups (Bean Soup, Chili, Minestrone Soup) and stews for tasty cold-weather dishes.
3. Serve legumes in Mexican entrees such as Bean and Cheese Burritos or
4. Tacos with legumes added to the meat mixture or
5. Super Nachos with legumes added to the meat mixture.
6. Try pinto, pink or lima beans with ham served with cornbread, a tossed green salad, fruit and milk.
7. Add cooked legumes (lentils work well) to entrees such as meatloaf, spaghetti sauce, lasagna, or sloppy joes. This increases the fiber, lowers the fat and is a low-cost meat extender.
8. Offer legume-based items for vegetarian entrees such as hummus (offer as a salad plate with pita chips and fresh vegetables) or red beans and rice.
9. Offer legumes as a breakfast meal in a breakfast burrito, served with eggs and salsa in a whole grain tortilla.
10. Offer legumes on the salad bar (kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, black eyed peas). This allows students to pick and choose a variety of legumes. Consider labeling the legumes so that the students know what they are.

Market your legume dishes by using eye-catching and mouth-watering names on your menus such as:

Rockin' Red Beans and Rice, Hearty Black Bean Chili, Dynamite Breakfast Burrito, Mouthwatering Meatloaf, Spectacular Spaghetti, Succulent Beef Stew, Chuck Wagon Baked Beans, Zesty Refried Beans, or Hip Hummus

Developed by the Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana's School Food Service Peer Trainers, Starr Fulmer, Kimberly Patacsil, and Sherri Pearson. September 2009, stenberg@montana.edu

File accessible at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/HealthierMT2.html>, under Helpful Menu Resources.

Denise Juneau, Superintendent • Montana Office of Public Instruction • www.opi.mt.gov